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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4707

June 11, 2019

Dr. Charles M. Kupperman
Deputy National Security Adviser
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Dr. Kupperman:

I write to follow up on a letter I sent you on March 25, 2019, regarding the role of Dr. William Happer, an avowed climate science denier, at the National Security Council. Although I requested a response to the questions I posed in my letter by April 5, 2019, I have yet to receive one.

This weekend, both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* reported that Dr. Happer played a leading role in blocking the written testimony of Dr. Rod Schoonover, a top intelligence agent at the State Department, in last week's House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence hearing on the "National Security Implications of Climate Change." Given these disturbing reports, the questions I raised in my March letter are more pertinent than ever. Congress, and the public, deserve to know what role Dr. Happer is playing in setting administration policy and whether he is undermining our national security by interfering with the critical work of our intelligence community.

I respectfully ask that you respond to the questions in my original letter (enclosed for your convenience) by June 18th, 2019, exactly one week from today.

Sincerely,



PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress

CC: Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy

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March 25, 2019

Dr. Charles M. Kupperman
Deputy National Security Adviser
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Dr. Kupperman:

I write to seek clarification on reports that the National Security Council (NSC) is working to assemble an ad-hoc committee to provide an “adversarial”¹ peer review of the federal government’s climate science findings, and that White House officials are hand-picking scientists who do not represent the consensus views on the impacts of climate change. I am deeply concerned that this closed-door initiative could undermine national security and shape the future of our nation’s work to address climate change in secret, without the public scrutiny required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). It is also particularly alarming that avowed climate change denier William Happer will lead this committee. While any President has the right to ignore or act in contradiction to the advice of top government scientists, it is clear that the goal of this ad-hoc committee is to undermine legitimate science itself, which will make it more difficult for national security officials to prevent and respond to the changing climate.

Climate change should not be a partisan issue. As 58 senior military and national security leaders who served in both Democratic and Republican administrations recently wrote, “Climate change is real, it is happening now, it is driven by humans, and it is accelerating.”² According to the Fourth National Climate Assessment of 2018, mandated by the Global Change Research Act of 1990, climate change is already affecting U.S. Department of Defense assets,³ causing the military to integrate climate risks in planning and adaptation. The United States has already spent tens of billions of dollars on infrastructure repairs and reconstruction stemming from extreme weather events and rising sea levels.⁴

Organizations such as the non-partisan Center for Climate and Security and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation have brought together climate scientists, military and security experts, and policy makers to develop collaborative solutions that protect our country from the very real

¹ <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/02/white-house-recruits-researchers-adversarial-climate-science-review>

² <https://climateandsecurity.org/letter-to-the-president-of-the-united-states-nsc-climate-panel/>

³ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/chapter/16/>

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/682765.pdf>

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national security challenge of climate change as a “threat multiplier.”⁵ Climate change will add additional stress to domestic and global poverty, causing conflict, environmental degradation and public health risks and increasing instability that directly affects our national security. Deliberately undermining decades of research and expertise in the face of such risks is foolish, short-sighted and irresponsible.

Simply put, this White House’s denial of climate change is putting the American people at risk. The administration released the Fourth National Climate Assessment which concludes, “human activities...are the dominant cause” of global warming,⁶ and President Trump replied, “I don’t believe it”.⁷ President Trump appointed a former coal lobbyist as EPA Administrator who fired a panel of scientific experts charged with assisting the EPA’s review of air quality standards.⁸ Now, the NSC reportedly will be naming a well-known climate denier as head of this new ad-hoc committee.

Dr. Happer’s views on climate science are well out of the mainstream.⁹ Dr. Happer is not a climate scientist and is associated with several climate denial organizations such as the Climate Exit Coalition (CLEXIT)¹⁰ and the CO2 Coalition¹¹ of which he is the founder and former board president. In 2015, Peabody Coal paid \$10,000-\$15,000 to Dr. Happer for his testimony on carbon dioxide at a hearing held by Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, which he donated back to the CO2 Coalition.¹²

Given the disturbing reports about your decision to place Dr. Happer in a position where he will be charged with undermining the federal government’s response to climate change, I request that you answer the following questions to provide clarification on the nature of the proposed National Security Council initiative:

1. Are the reports accurate that the White House is considering forming an ad hoc “adversarial” NSC panel to address climate change issues? If so, why are you forming this panel and what is its mission?

⁵ https://www.acq.osd.mil/cic/downloads/CCARprint_wForward_e.pdf

⁶ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-46324405/i-don-t-believe-it-trump-on-climate-report>

⁸ <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/10/trump-s-epa-scraps-air-pollution-science-review-panels?r3f.986>—<https://www.google.com/>

⁹ <https://www.cenews.net/stories/1060071869/>;

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/SR15_Chapter1_Low_Res.pdf

¹⁰ <https://web.archive.org/web/20170608071326/https://clxexit.net/2017/05/25/nix-paris-agreement/#more-99>

¹¹ <https://co2coalition.org/members/william-happer-phd/>

¹² <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4417035/Lindzen-Koonin-Happer-Respond-to-Judges-Question.pdf>

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2. The Department of Defense's 2019 Worldwide Threat Assessment identified "negative effects of environmental degradation and climate change" as risks to global security. Will the Defense Department officials responsible for the conclusions of this analysis be represented on the new panel?
3. The 2018 National Climate Assessment predicts that due to climate change, "annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century." Will the Administration officials responsible for these conclusions be represented on the panel?
4. Why was Dr. Happer chosen to lead this NSC initiative on climate security?
 - a. What is his current role in the White House?
 - b. What formal climate science training has he received?
 - c. What peer-reviewed research on climate science has he published that will inform the NSC initiative?
 - d. Does the Administration agree with Dr. Happer's previous statement that "the demonization of carbon dioxide is just like the demonization of the poor Jews under Hitler"?
5. What other officials are presently being considered for the panel? What criteria was used to choose them?
6. How will the panel coordinate with the National Science and Technology Council and the Office of Science and Technology Policy?
7. How will the panel coordinate with other national security agencies in the Administration? Has the White House established any formal protocols for interagency coordination?
8. How often will the panel meet? How will the Administration ensure that opposing views within the climate science community are proportionally represented?
9. How will the public receive regular updates on the Council's work?
10. What is the proposed chain of command for the NSC initiative on climate science?

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11. Will the panel be subject to FACA rules and regulations?
12. What energy and industry organizations has Dr. Happer worked for that could create a conflict of interest?
13. What actions is the Administration taking to address conflicts of interest for panel members?
 - a. Will panel members be required to disclose potential conflicts of interest?
 - b. Will panel members be required to sign the President's ethics pledge?
 - c. Will panel members be considered government employees subject to all applicable conflict of interest rules and regulations?

I ask that you respond to these questions by April 5, 2019.

Climate change will only continue to endanger our national security. Top climate scientists predict that within 12 years, it will lead to severe flooding, droughts, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. Climate change is creating refugees, claiming lives and costing taxpayers billions of dollars. Addressing this threat requires strong leadership from the Administration led by trained experts on climate science – not charlatans hand-picked to undermine the scientific and policy consensus on emerging national security threats.

Sincerely,



PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress

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